

Central States; Charles A. Callis, Southern States; John M. Knight, Western States; Joseph W. McMurrin, California; Brigham S. Young, Northwestern States; Rey L. Pratt, Mexico; Joseph Quinney, Jr., Canada; Eugene J. Neff, Hawaiian, and Benjamin Goddard, Bureau of Information, Temple Block, Salt Lake City.

All the seats in the large Tabernacle were occupied, both in the gallery and in the main hall and on the choir stand. Hundreds were standing in the side aisles, both on the main floor and in the gallery.

President Grant announced that the choir and congregation would sing, "O ye mountains high," out of respect to President Charles W. Penrose. President Grant read the poem in full, and stated that by permission of President Penrose the words in the song, "on the 'necks' of thy foes thou shalt tread," were changed, and would be sung, "on the 'schemes' of thy foes thou shalt tread."

After the choir and congregation had sung the hymn with spirit and effect, the opening prayer was offered by Elder Samuel F. Smith, president of the Snowflake stake of Zion.

A solo entitled, "Hosanna" was sung by Melvin Peterson.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

It is very gratifying, indeed, to see this immense congregation here this morning, bespeaking the interest of the Latter-day Saints in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is customary at the opening session of our conference to give some statistics and to refer to the condition of the Church at home and abroad. I am very pleased to be able to announce that the work of the Lord is growing all over the world; and that there is never a month or a year but what the Church is stronger, spiritually and financially, than it was the month or the year previous.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The following financial statement I am sure will be of interest to the people here assembled:

From the tithes of the Church there has been expended for stake and ward purposes, \$1,352,663.43.

For education, the maintenance and operation of Church schools, \$727,808.93.

For construction, maintenance and operation of temples, \$442,018.46.

For the care of the worthy poor and other charitable purposes, including hospital treatment, \$175,520.77.

For the maintenance and operation of all the missions, and for the erection of places of worship and other buildings in the missions, \$700,664.09.

This makes a total of \$3,398,675.68, taken from the tithes for the maintenance and operation of the stakes and wards, for the maintenance and operation of Church schools and temples, for charities, and for mission activities.

In addition to charities paid out of the tithes as before named, there have also been disbursed the fast offerings and Relief Society and other charities, amounting to \$489,406.61, which amount added to the \$175,520.77 paid from the tithes, makes a total of Church charities, \$664,927.38.

CHURCH GROWTH FOR THE YEAR 1924

Children blessed and entered on the records of the Church in stakes and missions, 19,955.

Children baptized in the stakes and missions, 14,047.

Converts baptized and entered on the records of the stakes and missions, 7,556.

There are now 94 stakes of Zion, 907 wards, 70 independent branches connected with the stakes, 24 missions and 654 branches in the missions.

SOCIAL STATISTICS

Birth rate, 33 per thousand.

Marriage rate, 13 per thousand.

Death rate, 7.3 per thousand.

There are 160,634 persons in the Church who are married; of this number 256 persons were divorced in the year 1924.

Families owning their own homes, 72 per cent.

PRESIDENT C. W. PENROSE SERIOUSLY ILL

As announced in the opening, President Charles W. Penrose is in a precarious condition. He sends his love to all the brethren, and desires them to know that they have his confidence in all that they may do; and his message to the Saints is to obey the law, wherever they reside.

Elder Seymour B. Young, President of the First Council of Seventy, has passed away since our last conference, having been a faithful member of the Council for something over forty years.

A MISSION HOME IN SALT LAKE CITY

A home on State street has been dedicated for the entertainment of missionaries, and for the purpose of giving them instructions for a week or more, prior to their departure upon their missions; and also to take care of any returning missionaries who may be stopping briefly in this city on their way home, after having filled an honorable mission. We are pleased to announce that at the dedication there was a rich outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord, and we feel assured in our hearts, judging from the inspiration of the occasion, that it will be a source of great benefit to our young men and young women who are called to go out into the mission field.

CHANGES IN STAKES

There have been some changes in a number of the stakes, and the new men chosen to preside are as follows:

Curlew stake, Colen H. Sweeten.

Yellowstone stake, John M. White.

Nebo stake, Lee R. Taylor.

San Luis stake, James P. Jensen.

Young stake, Elmer F. Taylor.

New wards have been organized since our last meeting as follows:

Hillcrest ward, Grant stake.

Inglewood ward, Los Angeles stake.

LaGrand Second ward, Nebo stake.
 Payson Fourth ward, Nebo stake.
 Santaquin Second ward, Nebo stake.
 Genola ward, Nebo stake.
 Virginia City ward, Los Angeles stake.
 Home Gardens ward, Los Angeles stake.
 Ballard ward Lost River stake.
 New stakes organized, since our last conference:
 Kolob stake, President George Ray Murdock.
 Palmyra stake, President Henry A. Gardner.

In addition to the death of President Seymour B. Young we announce the death, since our last meeting, of David H. Cannon, president of the St. George temple, for many years; Bishop James A. Wright, of Bingham ward, Jordan stake, and Bishop Armond T. Rose, of North Farmington ward, South Davis stake.

MISSIONARY WORK

Perhaps no one thing in connection with the Church is as dear to the hearts of the Latter-day Saints as our missionary labor. Counting the time, the salaries that might be earned by those who are in the mission field, and the expense of maintaining them there, the Latter-day Saints are expending today something over \$2,000,000 a year for the spread of the gospel in the world.

We know that the first and most important duty for us is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, might, mind and strength; and second to that is love for our fellowmen. No people in all the world in proportion to their numbers, are giving such evidence of a love for their fellowmen, and a desire for their welfare, as are the Latter-day Saints. Our missionary work proclaims to all the world our willingness to make financial sacrifice and to labor with no hope of earthly reward, for the salvation of the souls of the children of our Father in heaven. I am sure that a general statement of the missions will be of interest to this congregation.

We have in the California mission, presided over most ably by President Joseph W McMurrin, 125 missionaries. There are 8,625 people in that mission. We own Church property in that mission valued at \$289,114.04.

<i>American Missions:</i>	President	Missionaries	Members	Church Property
California, Joseph W. McMurrin.....		125	8,625	\$289,114.04
Canadian Joseph Quinney, Jr.....		71	716	23,021.47
Central, Samuel O. Bennion.....		158	8,712	110,410.26
Eastern, Brigham H. Roberts.....		143	4,689	232,818.55
Mexican, Rey L. Pratt.....		76	2,683	15,184.12
Northern, John H. Taylor.....		127	5,141	88,694.57
Northwestern, Brigham S. Young.....		99	5,599	82,535.76
Southern, Charles A. Callis.....		197	23,047	64,066.14
Western, John M. Knight.....		96	4,977	102,385.44
Total		1,092	64,189	\$1,008,230.35

Each and all of the men presiding over these missions are giving the best in their power for the advancement of their missions. They are men of God, devoted to the welfare of their respective missions. And this can be said also of all the other missions, the statistics of which I shall now read, giving the name of the mission, the president, the missionaries, the membership and the Church property.

European Missions:

Armenian, Joseph W. Booth.....	2	164	450.00
British, James E. Talmage.....	151	5,670	78,518.17

(Here let me mention the splendid work Elder James E. Talmage is doing presiding over the European mission. The fact that he is a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh gives him a standing in Europe that perhaps none of the rest of us could possibly have. He is receiving excellent consideration from newspapers there, and is working early and late, as he has done all his life. He is one of the most industrious, energetic men I have ever known, and is making a very splendid successor to President David O. McKay, who did such a good work as the president of the European mission.)

Danish, John S. Hansen.....	24	1,621	55,284.95
French, Russell H. Blood.....	30	468	1,242.03
Netherlands, Charles S. Hyde.....	61	3,189	57,229.02
Norwegian, A. Richard Peterson.....	17	1,621	52,774.43
South African, J. Wyley Sessions.....	18	485	17,823.30
Swedish, Hugo D. E. Peterson.....	30	2,051	53,350.17
Swiss and German, Fred Tadge.....	226	11,102	51,497.79
Total	559	26,371	\$368,169.86

Island Missions:

Australian, Charles H. Hyde.....	40	1,115	40,911.18
Hawaiian, Eugene J. Neff.....	61	13,083	195,830.00
Japan [Discontinued].....		164	
New Zealand, Angus T. Wright.....	45	6,184	150,575.66
Samoan, Ernest L. Butler.....	44	3,462	92,789.24
Tahitian, Ole B. Peterson.....	11	1,721	13,403.70
Tongan, Mark V. Coombs.....	19	1,051	24,853.52
Total	220	26,780	\$518,363.30

General:

Smith Mem. Farm, Angus J. Cannon.....			20,000.00
Palmyra Farm, Willard Bean.....			20,000.00
Temple Block, Benjamin Goddard.....			40,000.00
Total	1,871	117,340	\$1,974,763.51

The grand total of our missionaries is 1,871; of members in the missions, 117,340; the grand total of Church property in these missions is \$1,934,763.51, lacking but a very few dollars of \$2,000,000 of money invested in Church property in the missions throughout the world.

Certainly when we consider the limited means of the people who

embrace the gospel all over the world—for the gospel seems to reach the poor—we have great cause to rejoice in the financial showing in our missions, as well as the wonderful showing financially here at home.

PRESIDENT GRANT'S TOUR OF THE MISSIONS

Since I last had the privilege of meeting with you in general conference, I have visited the missionaries in the east, and given them instructions—in Indianapolis, Indiana; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; Detroit, Michigan, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; also in Chicago, and held public meetings in all of these places except Chicago.

At Minneapolis we had the pleasure of dedicating a very splendid meetinghouse and recreation hall erected there, and of meeting with a most excellent class of Latter-day Saints. We have chapels also at St. Paul and Minneapolis. The Saints at Detroit and at Indianapolis are gathering funds for the purpose of assisting in erecting chapels in those places.

On Nov. 27, I left Salt Lake City for Independence to attend the funeral of my cousin and the cousin of President Joseph F. Smith, Thalia Grant Smith. The services were well attended. After that I had the privilege of holding meetings in Independence, Kansas City, and St. Louis; also at Fort Worth, San Antonio and Kelsey, Texas, and in Wichita, Kansas, and instructing the missionaries in all of these places, as well as holding public meetings, which were well attended. In a number of places we have excellent meetinghouses to meet in. In others we have rented halls.

During this trip I had the privilege of speaking before the Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City, Missouri. The secretary announced his regret that all of the six thousand members of that great body had not had the privilege of listening to my twenty minute talk. I said in reply: "I can remedy that very easily. I will have six thousand copies of this speech delivered at your office so that when you send out your next monthly statements you can enclose a copy."

He expressed his pleasure in doing it. They were printed, and delivered, and I have received many letters from men who have read the speech, expressing their pleasure in having heard or read what I had to say regarding the faith of the Latter-day Saints. In that short address, speaking very rapidly (much more rapidly than I am doing now), I quoted all the Articles of our Faith and made comments upon them. It took four columns of the *Christmas News* to print that twenty and one-half minutes speech. I rejoice that there were at least a score of influential men who shook hands with me and expressed their pleasure in having heard the plain statement of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, as embodied in our Articles of Faith.

When I stop to reflect that the Latter-day Saints were expelled from the state of Missouri under the exterminating order of the governor of that state, then to think that representative men of one of

the largest business organizations in Kansas City—one of the most progressive cities in the Union—would listen with attention and afterwards congratulate the President of the Church upon a speech in which he quoted the Articles of Faith, and some of them expressed regret that I did not have an hour instead of twenty minutes, and invited me to come back again, and take the hour, certainly we have to acknowledge that God is moving in a mysterious way his wonders to perform, and that the Latter-day Saints are becoming known for what they really are—a God-fearing, upright people, who are loyal to God and to their country.

The newspapers in all these places gave me better notices and published fairer reports of the speeches I made than I have ever had before on any trip I have taken.

On January 9, I left Salt Lake City for Los Angeles, for a brief visit, feeling very much the need of a little rest. I had the pleasure, on that short trip of only ten days, of speaking in the Adams ward and the Matthews ward in Los Angeles stake.

Feb. 3, I left Salt Lake City for a visit to the California, the Central States, and the Southern States missions, first treading the sands of the Pacific, and a few days later the sands of the Atlantic. Meetings were held upon that trip, in Ocean Park, Oakland and San Francisco; also in New Orleans, in Jacksonville, Florida, and in Atlanta, Georgia.

In all of these places there was a splendid attendance, and again the newspapers gave very fair notices of the meetings and of what was said. In no case was there any attempt to ridicule or belittle or to change the remarks that I had made in public, where reports were taken, or where interviews were given. Some slight mistakes were made, but they were all unintentional mistakes.

I have never enjoyed greater liberty in proclaiming the gospel than I did in some of the meetings on this last trip, lasting something over five weeks, visiting the California, the Central States and the Southern States missions.

I believe this fully covers the activities of the Church that would be of interest to the Latter-day Saints, and of my own labors since we were together six months ago.

ABSOLUTE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

I rejoice beyond the power with which God has endowed me to express my feelings, in the knowledge I possess regarding the divinity of this great Latter-day work in which we, as Latter-day Saints, are engaged; and as I travel I find a lack of belief in God, and in the divinity of Jesus Christ, even among the ministers of the gospel, I rejoice in the fact that every man and woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an absolute faith in God, in his individuality, and an absolute faith that Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world; that he came to the earth with a divinely appointed mission

to die for the sins of the world, and that he is in very deed the head of the Church of Christ.

Upon the trip last mentioned, I cut from a newspaper a clipping which I had intended to read at this conference, but I have misplaced it. It was a recommendation by an English lord that people discard the "absurdity" of Jesus Christ as a God on earth and a Redeemer of the world, and that they accept the Mohammedan philosophy; suggesting that they could believe in all of the ethical teachings of the religion of Christ and Mohammed, but that they should get away from the absurdities of Christianity, and settle the various disputes and troubles that they were having in the Christian religion.

Wherever I read that statement—and I read it in a number of places—I took the trouble to state to the people in the various places where I preached, the position of the Latter-day Saints as to the gospel in which we believe. I quoted the vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, as follows:

"And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

"That he came unto the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

"That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;

"Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him."

I announced to the people that in the Church of Jesus Christ no man or woman would be admitted into the Church, or be permitted to retain fellowship who is not willing to accept this statement absolutely without mental reservation. I also read to them:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God."

I announced in those meetings, in some of which the majority of the audience were non-members of the Church, that every Latter-day Saint must subscribe to the doctrine that God himself visited the boy Joseph Smith, and that God himself introduced Jesus Christ to the boy as his well-beloved Son. I announced to these audiences that among the Latter-day Saints there is no evidence of "modernism" so-called, and that no man or woman will be fellowshipped in this Church who denies the individuality, the personality of God, or that Jesus Christ is in very deed the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of the world.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

I regret to say that there is becoming evident among the Saints, a lack of interest and a looseness in observing the Word of Wisdom. I regret to have heard that there are men occupying positions as bishops' counselors, and as members of high councils, who do not observe this law; that certain bishops' counselors and members of high councils are not only drinking tea and coffee, but some of them are using tobacco. No man who uses tobacco is worthy to stand as high councilor in this Church. He owes it to himself to clean himself up or step aside and allow a man with more faith, with more manhood, with more integrity to God and his laws, to take the position that he occupies.

President Wilford Woodruff from this stand, many years ago, called upon every man holding the Priesthood and occupying any office in this Church, to obey the Word of Wisdom or to resign and step aside. I reiterate that men who do not obey the Word of Wisdom are not worthy to stand as examples before the people, to be invited into private priesthood meetings and to discuss matters for the welfare of the Church of God. Their disobedience shows a lack of faith in the work of God. I shall not take your time to read all of the Word of Wisdom, but I shall take time to read the words of the living God that must be acknowledged by every Latter-day Saint to be the word of God, or he or she is not entitled to be a member of this Church. After telling us what is good for us, the Lord makes a promise that is one of the most marvelous, one of the most uplifting and inspiring promises that could possibly be made to mortal man. He says:

THE PROMISE

"And all Saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them."

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE DESTROYER REBUKED

I shall never forget the occasion when a friend appealed to me, upon learning that the doctor had announced that his daughter, stricken with diphtheria, would die before morning. He asked me to pray for that daughter, and after leaving his office I prayed with all the earnestness of my soul that God would heal that girl. While praying, the inspiration came to me: "The power of the living God is here on the earth. The Priesthood is here. Hurry! Hurry! Get John Henry Smith; go and rebuke the power of the destroyer, and the girl shall live."

The doctor waiting upon that girl, said she could not live till morning; but when morning came he explained that he could not com-

prehend it, and that he believed the girl was going to get well. He could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the change in the girl's condition over night. The power of the living God rebuked the destroyer.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them."

The Lord has told us through the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life, through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come."

No man who breaks the Word of Wisdom can gain the same amount of knowledge and intelligence in this world as the man who obeys that law. I don't care who he is or where he comes from, his mind will not be as clear, and he cannot advance as far and as rapidly and retain his power as much as he would if he obeyed the Word of Wisdom.

TITHES AND REAL PROSPERITY

The law of financial prosperity to the Latter-day Saints, under covenant with God, is to be an honest tithepayer, and not to rob the Lord in tithes and offerings. Prosperity comes to those who observe the law of tithing; and when I say prosperity I am not thinking of it in terms of dollars and cents alone, although as a rule the Latter-day Saints who are the best tithepayers are the most prosperous men, financially; but what I count as real prosperity, as the one thing of all others that is of great value to every man and woman living, is the growth in a knowledge of God, and in a testimony, and in the power to live the gospel and to inspire our families to do the same. That is prosperity of the truest kind. I would rather die in poverty knowing that my family could testify that, to the best of the ability with which God had endowed me, I had observed his laws and kept his commandments, and by my example, had proclaimed the gospel, than to have all the wealth of the world.

OUR RELIGION THE TRUTH

Either we have the truth, and this gospel called "Mormonism," is in very deed the plan of life and salvation, the power of God unto salvation, through his Son Jesus Christ, and by following its teachings the greatest of all the gifts of God to man, namely, life eternal, will be ours, or it is not the truth.

God has given to men and women all over the wide world, seeking for the light of his spirit, in answer to humble prayers, a testimony and a knowledge that this gospel is exactly what it purports to be—that it is the truth, that it will stand forever, and that those who live it shall be exalted eternally in the presence of our heavenly Father, and his Son, our Redeemer.

CLOSING TESTIMONY

May God help each and every one of us who have a knowledge of the divinity of this work to live so that other men, seeing our good deeds, may glorify God and be led to investigate the plan of life and salvation. I bear witness to you here today, that I know God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of the true and living God, that he was a martyr, that he gave his life for this cause, and that his blood bears witness to the integrity, the honesty and inspiration of his mission as a prophet of the living God, because he was true even unto death. May God help us one and all to live the truth, is my prayer, and I ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A soprano solo, "The mighty God hath spoken", was sung by Mrs. Laurinda P. Brewerton.

ELDER DAVID O. MCKAY

I have had a few surprises in my life, but I think none greater than this. However, it is a very agreeable surprise. I am thankful for the privilege of meeting this vast audience and partaking of the spirit of this inspirational gathering. It is a joy to look once again into the faces of close associates and dear friends. It is this element which makes the meeting this morning more appreciated than the meetings generally that I have attended during the past three or four years.

THE SPIRIT OF ONENESS AND LOVE

I am glad to report, however, that the spirit of the meetings abroad, wherever we meet Latter-day Saints, is the same as that which we have here this morning. It matters not in what part of the globe the meeting is held, whether in the islands of the sea, in Japan, in Syria, in the Scandinavian countries, in England, Germany, France, Holland—wherever one meets a group of Latter-day Saints whose faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ is unwavering, there one finds the spirit of oneness, the spirit of love, the spirit of willing sacrifice for the good of humanity. God bless the Latter-day Saints all over the world that they may continue in that same spirit.

APPEAL FOR AN HONEST HEARING

It is a source of regret to me that such people should be so grossly misunderstood. May I read the following:

"We desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

These are the words of some Jews from Jerusalem to whom Paul, then a prisoner, bound in Rome, had made an appeal for an honest